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Ancon Medical observes Cervical Cancer Prevention Week, encourages screening

Company's NBT technology offers expanded, less invasive screening options for cervical cancer

With the theme of "Reduce Your Risk," Cervical Cancer Prevention Week in the UK serves as an important reminder of the power of medical screening, as the death rates for the cancer dropped significantly after effective testing was discovered. Ancon Medical, Inc., maker of revolutionary breath screening technology, encourages women to be screened for cervical cancer regularly, while the company is at the same time advancing technology that could make cervical cancer screening easier for women.

Set for Jan. 22-28, Cervical Cancer Prevention Week highlights the importance of an effective screening test, with the Pap smear test being called by U.S. National Public Radio "one of the greatest success stories in cancer prevention history." After widespread Pap smear testing was instituted in the 1970s, the mortality rate for women in the United State from cervical cancer was cut by more than half, and the American Cancer Society estimates that screening currently saves more than 4,000 lives a year.

Despite the success of the Pap smear test, not all women are regularly having the common screening, which for some women can be intimidating and invasive. As Women's Health magazine online asked in March 2014: "[After all, who likes Pap smears?](#)"

Research shows that 75 percent of cervical cancers can be prevented by screening tests like the Pap smear. However, one in four women don't get this potentially-life saving test, as nearly half a million women aged 25-29 skipped the screening last year.

"Cervical Cancer Prevention Week delivers a vital message about the importance of screening, one that we at Ancon Medical wholeheartedly support," said Ancon Medical CEO Wesley Baker. "In fact, it fits with the core mission of Ancon Medical, which is to advance early, convenient screening for a host of diseases."

Ancon Medical has developed a unique screening system called Nanoparticle Biomarker Tagging (NBT) which could add another screening method for cervical cancer, but also create new screening tests for a wide range of diseases, including lung cancer, the Ebola virus, tuberculosis and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

An NBT device works by detecting in exhaled breath specific “biomarkers,” which are DNA-protein controlled volatile organic compounds (VOCs) metabolites specific to diseases. Researchers have discovered biomarkers for more than 400 diseases, including one for cervical cancer, and more continue being uncovered.

By knowing the VOC biomarker for cervical cancer, researchers would be able to program an NBT device to search for that specific molecule in the exhaled breath of a test subject. No technology on the market is as sensitive at detecting biomarkers than NBT, which can detect the fingerprints of the disease at concentrations as low as one ion in 10,000 cubic centimeters, giving the device a sensitivity that could be measured down to a single molecule.

Ancon's NBT device offers many advantages over the Pap smear. Since it requires only a breath into the sensor, it's far less invasive than the Pap smear. Also, since an NBT device can be operated by non-medical personnel with minimum training, allowing for more frequent, widespread screening.

“A screening from an NBT device can add an extra layer of screening to what is an already successful test to find cervical cancer,” Baker said. “When a noninvasive test like the NBT become more widely available, one day there may not be a need for Cervical Cancer Prevention Week, as screenings would be so easy and routine, women wouldn't need to be encouraged to have them.”

Baker who is a member of the Royal Society of Medicine in the UK has a strong personal motivation for advancing the NBT technology from his own family, as his son Thomas was diagnosed with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) - Polyarticular in June 2017. The disease causes regular pain, fatigue, stomach issues and exhaustion.

“I'm thankful that Thomas was diagnosed when he was so that we can now fight this disease as a family,” Baker said. “I want other families to be able to have the same chance we do. That's why we're working so hard at Ancon to promote and advance NBT technology.”

Ancon Medical, and its associated company Ancon Technologies Ltd., has patents on NBT technology in both the U.S. and U.K. Ancon Medical is a member of Medical Alley, a Medical trade association based in Minnesota.

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